DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 460 659 HE 034 575

AUTHOR	Livingstone, D. W.; Stowe, Susan
TITLE	Class and University Education: Inter-Generational Patterns in Canada. NALL Working Paper.
INSTITUTION	Ontario Inst. for Studies in Education, Toronto. New Approaches to Lifelong Learning.
SPONS AGENCY	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Ottawa (Ontario).
REPORT NO	NALL-WP-36-2001
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	15p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/depts/sese/csew.nall.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; *College Students; Equal Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Low Income Groups; Minority Groups; *Social Class; *Socioeconomic Status
IDENTIFIERS	*Canada

ABSTRACT

Young people from lower class origins continue to face major barriers to university education in Canada. This paper documents both substantial inter-generational class mobility and continuing inequalities in formal educational attainments by class origins. While Canada now has the world's higher educational attainments in its youth cohort and has experienced rapid growth in adult education participation as well, those from professional/managerial families remain more than three times as likely to attain a degree as those from working class origins. There is also mounting evidence that escalating financial costs are again increasing the relative class inequalities in university education. These large and increasing class inequalities are compared with the much more equitable and extensive participation in informal learning found in a recent national survey, as well as the underemployment of working class people in the Canadian job structure. In light of these educational and economic inequalities, needs-based student subsidies and democratic workplace reforms are seen as major means to address persistent discrimination against the learning capacities and aspirations for university education of those from lower class origins. (Contains 4 tables and 37 references.) (Author)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 460 659

Class and University Education:
Inter-Generational Patterns in Canada
NALL Working Paper

D. W. Livingstone and Susan Stowe

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. W. Livingstone

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

HE 034 575

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NALL Working Paper #36-2001

Class and University Education: Inter-generational Patterns in Canada

D.W. Livingstone and Susan Stowe
Centre for the Study of Education and Work
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education OISE/UT

the research network for New Approaches to Lifelong Learning

NALL

Le Réseau de recherche sur les nouvelles approches de l'éducation permanente

---

Abstract

Class and University Education: Inter-generational Patterns in Canada

D.W. Livingstone and Susan Stowe
Centre for the Study of Education and Work
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education OISE/UT

Young people from lower class origins continue to face major barriers to university education in Canada. This paper documents both substantial inter-generational class mobility and continuing inequalities in formal educational attainments by class origins. While Canada now has the world's highest educational attainments in its youth cohorts and has experienced rapid growth in adult education participation as well, those from professional/managerial families remain more than three times as likely to attain a degree as those from working class origins. There is also mounting evidence that escalating financial costs are again increasing the relative class inequalities in university education. These large and increasing class inequalities are compared with the much more equitable and extensive participation in informal learning found in a recent national survey, as well as the underemployment of working class people in the Canadian job structure. In light of these educational and economic inequalities, needs-based student subsidies and democratic workplace reforms are seen as major means to address persistent systemic discrimination against the learning capacities and aspirations for university education of those from lower class origins.

HE 134575

Introduction

In epochal terms, both upward and downward class mobility in capitalist societies are much greater than

in any prior class societies. In contrast to slavery and to tribute-paying modes of production such as Western European feudalism, those born into lower classes have been decreasingly tied to the land while inheritance of proprietorial status has also become much less certain. With inter-firm competition over commodity markets and class struggles between employers and wage laborers as driving forces, reliance on ascriptive criteria for assigning economic positions has greatly diminished as capitalist production systems have expanded. Conversely, reliance on labour market exchanges based on formal criteria such as achieved educational credentials has become increasingly pervasive in determining adult economic position. In the early 21st century, it is probably fair to say that educational credentials have become the primary criteria for assigning economic positions in all advanced capitalist societies and that failure to attain at least the same educational level as one's parents is a recipe for downward mobility. But, while some may describe this condition as a "meritocracy", major systemic biases persist against upward class mobility for the working classes or downward mobility for the upper classes. The purpose of this paper is to document recent inter-generational patterns of class mobility in Canada in relation to the actual learning achievements of younger generations. We will find both substantial class mobility and persistent barriers to mobility, extraordinary growth of advanced education attainments and recent declines in fairer access, as well as the existence of extensive informal learning practices among the lower classes which are generally ignored in both education systems and employment.

The extent of mobility perceived to exist in contemporary capitalist societies is contingent on prevalent conceptions of equality. Three basic types of equality can be distinguished in public discourse and practice: *equality of initial opportunity; equality of continuing participation; and equality of outcome*. As most commonly applied to educational institutions, equal opportunity denotes trying to give all children a comparable chance to go to school; equal participation means that those from all social backgrounds are proportionately represented in the student body at respective levels of schooling; and equal outcomes are achieved when those completing schooling come from all social background groups in similar proportions. As enrolment in primary schooling has become universal in advanced capitalist societies, there has been increased emphasis placed on trying to achieve equal opportunity through ensuring that socially disadvantaged children have sufficient material provisions and basic cognitive skills to utilize their full learning capacities, most notably in various "head start" programs. As higher education has expanded, there have been initiatives to address equality of participation through affirmative action measures which give special entry consideration to qualified applicants from some social origins to try to address their historic under-representation. Some social critics have argued that neither initial opportunity nor continuing participation measures are sufficient to overcome reproduction of systemic e !ucational inequality and that more proactive steps should be taken toward equal outcomes, favoring those from disadvantaged backgrounds to try to ensure that they graduate in proportionate numbers and obtain commensurate social positions. Generally, a focus on initial opportunity offers the rosiest picture of the extent of educational equality, while focusing on outcomes provides the most depressing one. But all three conceptions of equality are based on the assumption that variations in learning capacity are similarly distributed among children of all social origins and that all children should be given equitable chances to realize their potential. Even individualist notions of equal opportunity which are indifferent to systemic social bias typically assume that all children should have equal chances to compete for "survival of the fittest". Only genetically-based conceptions of inequality which claim that children from some social origins are inherently inferior intellectually explicitly reject this assumption; such notions now find little favor in democratic societies. The present analysis will focus primarily on the extent of equality of outcomes in terms of university graduation rates by class origins because the economic benefits of obtaining a degree are most clearly demonstrable. For example, Clark (2000) found that in 1997, those with a bachelor degree from the class of 1995 in Canada earned average incomes of $43,600 compared to $29,700 for those who had a high school diploma.

Class Mobility in Canada

The class structure of capitalist societies is continually changing. As the most dynamic and prolific mode of production, capitalism continues to expand its scale of production and to take over pre-capitalist modes globally. Expanded production in advanced capitalist economies generates new openings in the upper portions of the class hierarchy as the higher classes are unable to produce sufficient numbers of offspring to fill these positions; additional entrants to these positions are drawn from domestic lower classes and from immigrant labour. The commodification of production relations has increasingly drawn women from unpaid labour into wage labour positions. Expanded capitalist production systems and

generalization of wage and salary employment as the dominant form of labour have also been associated with growth of intermediate class positions, including supervisory personnel and technical experts, to co-ordinate and control larger workforces in larger work organizations,. The concentrating and centralizing tendencies of larger capitalist enterprises serve to diminish the relative availability of small commodity production (e.g. family farming, independent craft work) and to make inter-generational proprietorial continuity less secure. Inter-firm competition ensures that class positions in employment are continually vulnerable to either termination or re-invention in response to changing commodity market conditions. Continuing changes in production technologies to gain market advantage lead to rapid shifts in the distribution of jobs between industrial sectors, such as the major shift in recent generations from manufacturing to service industries. The prospect of being thrown into unemployment is also a constant threat. So, in contrast to prior economies, upward or downward inter-generational mobility are more likely to be the common condition than class stability.

Class mobility has probably been relatively high in Canada. The "settler economy" which supplanted aboriginal societies continued to expand into additional spaces well into the 20th century as European immigrants took up small landholding and provided most of the wage labour for the development of a capitalist production system. Small commodity production in agriculture and other extractive industries then experienced rapid post-WWII decline with the growth of corporate enterprises and state sector employment. Continuing expansion of capitalist manufacturing and service industries came to rely increasingly on immigrant labour from "underdeveloped" societies. Throughout the history of modern Canada, many immigrants have regarded Canada as a way station to the United States, which has further undermined inter-generational reproduction of the class structure. Expanded capitalist production has also been associated with dramatic changes in the participation of women in paid labour, from around 10 percent of the labour force in 1900 to nearly half of all paid workers a century later. Post-WWII economic expansion has increasingly drawn married women into the active labour force; between 1950 and the mid-1990s, the proportion of married women who were in the labour force rose from about 10 percent to nearly 60 percent (Canadian Encyclopedia Plus, 1995). With all of these structural changes, the chances of young people assuming the class positions of their parents have diminished.

The available empirical evidence suggests that Canada has one of the highest rates of inter-generational economic mobility of all advanced capitalist societies. Measures of inter-generational income elasticities indicate that only about 20 percent of the relative income difference between parents is generally being passed on to their children in Canada, comparable figures to Sweden and Finland and much lower than the U.S. and the United Kingdom which are between 40 and 60 percent (Corak, 2001, pp. 279-280).

Table 1 summarizes the recent extent of inter-generational class mobility in Canada according to a 1998 national survey.[1] The class positions used in this table are defined by ownership status and control of the social and technical relations of production.[2] "Proprietors" include those who have legal ownership and overarching direct control of private enterprises, including corporate executives, small employers and the self-employed; the "professional/managerial class grouping" includes those who exercise managerial control over both other employees and the technical design of work, as well as those whose specialized technical knowledge gives them warrant to plan and initiate actual technical work processes; "semi-professionals and supervisors" generally work under professional/managerial employees and within conditions controlled by them but exercise technical and social authority respectively over more subordinate employees; "workers" include all other employees without either formally designated authority over other workers or discretionary control over the technical design of the work process.

Table 1 Respondent's Occupational Class by Father's Class, Employed Labour Force Over 25, Canada, 1998

Respondent's Class (%)

Father's Class	Proprietor	Prof/Mgr	Semi-prof/ Supervisor	Worker	Column Total
Proprietor	29	18	11	42	31
Prof/Mgr	19	35	15	31	15
Semi-prof/Supervisor	21	36	7	36	8
Worker	13	20	9	58	46
Row Total	19	23	11	47	100

Source: NALL (1999). N=743.

The column and row distributions in this table offer a very rough estimate of the changes in the Canadian class structure in recent generations, based on the current class positions of the employed labour force over 25 and the main class positions of their fathers.[3] Respondents in the current employed labour force are less likely than their fathers to be owners of a business enterprise (19 percent versus 31 percent). They are also more likely to have attained a professional/managerial status than their fathers (23 percent versus 15 percent). While there have been shifts from manufacturing to service work and from supervisory to semi-professional employment, there appears to have been little change in the general proportion of working class jobs (46 percent versus 47 percent) or of semi-professional/ supervisory positions (8 percent versus 11 percent). These changes are consistent with general concentrating tendencies in private capitalist enterprise and incremental growth in reliance on "knowledge workers" (see Livingstone, 2001). But the working class remains by far the largest single class grouping and there is little indication that it will be disappearing anytime soon–contrary to the views of those theorists who are already bidding it farewell.

The most important insights from Table 1 however come from the internal cells which summarize the recent extent of inter-generational class mobility in Canada. The majority (58 percent) of men and women born into households with working class fathers have assumed working class jobs themselves in adulthood. Only minorities in all other class groupings have remained in the same general class position as their fathers. For those with proprietorial fathers, less than a third (29 percent) retain proprietor positions and downward mobility into the working class has been quite likely (42 percent); this is partly a reflection of the general decline of small enterprises. While professional/managerial positions have been expanding, only about a third (35 percent) of those with professional/managerial fathers have attained similar positions while nearly half (46 percent) are in worker or semi-professional/ supervisor positions. Those with semi-professional/supervisor fathers are less likely to take up the same positions (7 percent) than any other, and most likely to experience upward mobility to professional/managerial (36 percent) or proprietorial (21 percent) class positions. In fact, the only other class of origin besides the working class in which the majority retain the same adult class position as their fathers may be the corporate executive fraction of the capitalist class; but there is insufficient direct evidence to prove this at the moment.[4]

More detailed analyses by age cohorts in this survey and a related series of Ontario surveys (Livingstone, Hart and Davie, 2001) indicate that majorities between 55 and 60 percent of those from working class families have remained in working class positions in all age cohorts from the 1930s to the 1970s. If you are born into the working class in Canada, you are most likely to stay there. Downward mobility into the working class is also substantial, including around a third of those from most other class origins. Overall, the probability of remaining in the same general class position as your father appears to be around 40 percent in Canada at present. Class mobility, either upward or downward, is more common than simple class reproduction.

The Learning Society: A General Profile

An inclusive profile of adults' learning practices should include their formal educational attainments, participation in adult education courses, and informal learning activities outside organized programs and courses (see Livingstone, 2001). Canada now leads the world in its levels of post-secondary formal education with nearly half of the 20-64 population having attained some form of post-secondary credential by 1996, including 17 percent with university degrees and 31 percent with other

post-secondary credentials (Statistics Canada, 2000). After very rapid growth in participation rates from the 1960s to the 1980s, the rate of university enrolment in youth cohorts flattened out in the 1990s (Alto, Gommes, and Micussi, 1999; Bouchard and Zhao, 2000). While Canada still trails many European societies in adult education provisions, adult course participation expanded even more rapidly, from 4 percent in 1960 to 35 percent in the early 1990s, before similarly flattening out (Livingstone, 2001). A more inclusive measure in the 1998 NALL survey found that 44 percent of all Canadian adults participated in some form of course or workshop of at least short duration during the prior year. According to their self-reports in the NALL survey, around 95 percent of Canadian adults are now devoting some time to intentional informal learning activities related to their paid employment, household duties, community volunteer work and other general interests, an average of about 15 hours a week. The incidence of intentional informal learning also appears to have increased since the first empirical studies conducted in the 1960s consistently found averages around 10 hours per week (Tough, 1978). The participation rates and time involved in informal learning are much greater than in adult education courses in which around a third of all adults currently spend an average of only a few hours per week (Statistics Canada, 2000, February 21).

As Table 2 shows, those who have higher formal education attainments are more likely to take further adult education courses. But the incidence of informal learning is equitable regardless of prior schooling. Those without a high school diploma are much less likely than university graduates to have taken a course in the past year, but they have very similar rates of participation in informal learning. School dropouts and university graduates both spent an average of about 15 hours a week in informal learning. Adult informal learning is like the submerged portion of an iceberg, not usually seen but essential to supporting the visible part (Livingstone, 1999b).

Table 2 Participation in Adult Education and Informal Learning by School Attainment, Canadian Adults, 1998

Schooling	Course or Workshop Participation (%)	Informal Learning (%)
No diploma	18	98
High School Diploma	52	98
Community College	58	98
University Degree	67	98
Total	44	96

Source: Livingstone (2001). N=1562

It should be noted here that people prioritize different forms of learning through the adult life course. Young people devote a great deal of time to both course participation and informal learning in the transition to adulthood. Retired people continue to be active informal learners even though most are not interested in taking courses. The relative importance of courses diminishes as middle-aged adults accumulate more experiential knowledge. Older employees participate very little in courses but continue to be active informal learners, as well as valuable informal tutors for younger workers. But, overall, the NALL survey findings confirm that by any reasonable definition Canada is now a "learning society".

Class and Learning

Within this general context of inter-generational class mobility and growing participation in various learning activities, we can now look more closely at current relations between class location and learning. Researchers have typically assessed educational equality in terms of comparisons between the formal education of parents and children. The rapid expansion of higher education in Canada has led to a situation in which by the early 1990s over half of Canadian adults had attended some form of post-secondary institution in comparison to only about 10 percent of their parents; two-thirds of Canadians had exceeded the formal education of their parents while less than 10 percent attained less education. However, there continued to be a strong association between parental education and children's

education; 80 percent of those whose parents had participated in post-secondary education participated themselves, while only 40 percent of those whose parents had less than a high school diploma participated (Fournier, Butlin and Giles, 1995). An international survey conducted in the mid-90s found that the correlation between parent and child education in Canada was about .40 for both father's and mother's education, similar to the correlation with the most highly educated parent in the U.S. and higher than the association in Sweden, Australia or New Zealand. Among the 26 to 35 age cohort in Canada, nearly 70 percent of those whose parents had post-secondary credentials had themselves attained a college diploma or university degree; less than a quarter of those whose parents had not completed high school had achieved post-secondary credentials. The extent of inter-generational educational mobility on several measures was therefore lower than in Sweden, Australia or New Zealand. The differences in post-secondary attainment between those with less educated parents and those with highly educated parents in this cohort and those aged 46 to 55 appeared to be increasing somewhat in Canada, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, due mainly to a greater relative difficulty for those with less educated parents to complete a post-secondary education (deBroucker and Underwood, 1998). This conclusion is supported by a series of national surveys of Canadian university graduates which has found that while the proportions of 1982 graduates with parents who were university graduates and parents who had not completed high school were both just under 30 percent of all graduates, by 1995 the proportions has shifted to over 40 percent from university graduate families and only 15 percent from families in which neither parent had completed high school (Corak, 2001). The basic inter-generational pattern is that those whose parents have more education tend to both participate more in and complete higher education programs themselves and that, while younger age groups in general get more education than their parents, the education gap between those from less educated and more educated families seems to be increasing.

But formal educational attainments of parents is not a very precise measure of class origins. The conception of class positions we are relying on is based on relations in capitalist production systems and parental educational attainment does not guarantee class position for either parents or children. The central question is the extent to which class origins are related to differential educational attainments. Relatively few Canadian studies have actually addressed this question. Most of the relevant empirical studies have relied on stratification scales (notably the Blishen and Porter-Pineo scales) which ignore proprietorial classes but otherwise approximate the basic class positions described above (see Livingstone and Mangan, 1996).

The most extensive review of the prior Canadian research indicates general findings of substantial effects of class origins on educational attainment and at least slight declines in overall class origin effects during the post-WWII era (Nakhaie, 2000). For example, Nakhaie's own analysis of two national surveys found that among the entire Canadian-born, over 25 population in 1985, men and women from professional/managerial families were about 5 times as likely to have completed a university degree as those from blue collar working class families; by 1994, university completion increased from all class origins but the professional/managerial-blue collar difference had decreased to about 4 to 1 (Nakhaie, 2000, p. 590). A more specific age cohort analysis of the same surveys using the Blishen socio-economic status (SES) scale found that university participation rates in 1985 among the 18 to 21 age group with fathers from the lowest quartile, middle half and highest quartile of this occupational scale were 13.7 percent, 14.5 percent and 33 percent, respectively; by 1994 these participation rates had increased to 18.3 percent, 25.3 percent and 40 percent (Bouchard and Zhao, 2000). Those from the highest SES origins remained more than twice as likely to attend university as those from the lowest origins, although the ratio declined slightly (from 2.4 to 2.2); however, a widening gap emerged between those from low SES and middle SES origins, raising growing concerns about educational inequality.

The founding of the modern Canadian national economy involved the oppression of Aboriginal peoples, the exploitation of ethnic minority workers and the exclusion of women from paid employment. Their participation in Canadian educational systems has been similarly limited historically. However, women's dramatic increases in employment during recent generations coincides with greatly increased participation in higher education. By the mid-90s, daughters had achieved parity with sons in university degree completion, compared with their mothers who were about half as likely as their fathers to have obtained a degree (Fournier, Butlin and Giles, 1995). By 2000, women's university participation rates exceeded those of men (Clark, 2000). Immigrants to Canada, who are now predominantly of non-European ethnic origins, are now generally more likely than the Canadian-born population to have

university degrees (Butlin, 1999). Aboriginal students continue to be at much greater risk of dropping out of school than non-Aboriginals and, while the percentage of the Aboriginal population with a university degree doubled between 1986 and 1996, at 4 percent this figure remained far lower than the non-Aboriginal average of 19 percent (Statistics Canada, 2000, p. 97). More generally, in spite of significant gains in aggregate educational participation rates, both women and many visible minorities continue to face systemic biases in specific educational programs and employment opportunities in Canada (see for example Gaskell, 1992; Dei, 1995; Galabuzi, 2001).

Differences in university participation and completion rates in Canada are not restricted to class, gender, and ethno-racial origins. Students from Ontario and the Maritime provinces are more likely to attend university than those from other provinces, while those from rural areas are less likely to attend than urban students (Butlin, 1999).

It is probably accurate to conclude along with earlier empirical analysts of multiple effects on educational attainment (e.g. Anisef, Okihiro, and James, 1982; Pineo and Goyder, 1988) that class origins are generally the most significant determinant of high attainment for most Canadians. As Guppy and Davies (1998, p. 119) have most recently ascertained: "father's occupation has a significant bearing on the likelihood of his children studying at the university level. These differences far outweigh any effects of sex or ethnicity". Nakhaie's (2000) analysis of educational attainments by class origins controlling for ethnicity and finding similar effects for males and females lends further support to this conclusion. However, it is more realistic to consider class, gender and race biases as interactive and interlocking. For example, some class effects appear to be stronger among both francophones and visible minorities. Disproportionately more francophones from higher SES backgrounds have been found to be attending university in earlier studies (Harvey, 1977; Guppy, Vellutini, and Balson, 1987) The differences in university degree attainment between those from working class and those from professional/managerial employee family origins among visible minorities are now greater than the differences between those from working class and professional/managerial families with European origins (Livingstone, 1999a, p. 61).

Data from the 1998 NALL survey, while not containing large enough numbers of visible minorities to reliably test these interactive effects, provide more recent confirmation of some of the above patterns and some further insight into trends in class-based educational inequalities. As Table 3 summarizes, an age cohort analysis of the differences in university degree completion between those from working class and professional/managerial family origins indicates that among the 25 to 34 cohort those from professional/managerial families are at least 3 times as likely to have a degree as those from working class origins. Comparative data from older cohorts indicate that there may have been a significant decline in effect of class origins over the past few generations, with those over 55 experiencing a differential of more than 5 times as many university graduates from professional/managerial as from working class families. Very similar patterns have been found for male and female respondents to this survey. However, further analysis of university completion rates for those under 24 adults in 1998 suggests that class origin effects may again be increasing, with professional/managerial-working class differentials and high SES/low SES Blishen scale differences once more approaching 4 times. We will return to this question in the next section.

Table 3 University Degree Completion by Age Group and Father's Class Position, Canada 1998
% University Degree Completion

Age Group	Total	Prof/Mgr Class Father	Working Class Father	PMC/WC Ratio
25-34	22.2	45.1	14.7	3.1
35-44	19.6	38.3	10.2	3.8
45-54	18.9	42.9	11.6	3.7
55-64	11.0	27.3	5.4	5.1
65+	6.7	23.8	4.0	6.0

Source: NALL (1999). N=1562.

Table 4 summarizes relevant learning profiles of the currently employed Canadian labour force by

specific occupational classes in 1998. The majority of corporate executives, and around 40 percent of all professionals and managers have university degrees while less than 10 percent of service and industrial workers have obtained degrees. Over half of those in the employed labour force participated in some form of course or workshop in the prior year but corporate executives, professionals and managers were twice as likely to participate as industrial workers. There are marked differences in performance underemployment rates between occupational classes.[5] According to conventional estimates of educational equivalencies to job performance requirements, only around 10 percent of corporate executives, professionals and managers have over two years more of schooling than is actually needed to perform their jobs, while nearly half of service workers and about 30 percent of industrial workers do. There appears to be a massive underutilization of the achieved skills and knowledge of the Canadian working class in the current job structure (see Livingstone, 1999a).

Table 4 Occupational Class by Schooling, Course Participation, Employment-related Informal Learning, and Underemployment, Employed Labour Force, 1998

Occupational Class	University Degree (%)	Course or workshop (%)	Employ.-related Informal learn. (%)	Highly Underemployed (%)**
Corporate exec*	70	71	98	9
Professional	40	67	97	11
Manager	34	73	94	12
Small employer	22	52	91	17
Semi-professional	23	68	86	8
Self-employed	15	45	90	17
Supervisor	12	63	87	35
Service worker	8	54	81	46
Industrial work.	4	33	83	29
Total	17	55	86	27

Source: Livingstone (2001). N=951
*Data for Ontario from Livingstone, Hart and Davie, (1999).
**At least two years more schooling than required to perform job by GED estimates

But, regardless of the current mismatch between job skills and requirements, the vast majority of workers continue to be actively involved in quite extensive employment-related learning activities. As Table 4 also indicates, most of those in all occupational classes were involved in some form of employment-related informal learning activities in the past year and the participation rates of industrial workers are almost as high as those of corporate executives, professionals and managers. Indeed, industrial workers are found to spend more time in employment-related informal learning (an average of 9 hours a week) than occupational classes with higher course participation rates, perhaps partly to compensate for limited access to organized courses. "Discouraged workers" and others outside the current "active" labour force also continue to be quite active informal learners in other spheres (Livingstone, 2001). Neither chronic unemployment nor other forms of underemployment have discouraged the pursuit of lifelong learning.

In terms of continuing parental class effects on respondents' adult learning, it is interesting to find that class origins appear to have no enduring influence on the rate of participation in adult education courses; workers from working class origins or from professional/managerial origins have virtually identical participation rates, while professional/managerial employees from working class origins have the same participation rates as those from professional/managerial families. Downward class mobility appears to discourage engagement in further education while upward class mobility encourages it. Regardless of class origins, those currently in lower occupational classes, as well as women and visible minorities, tend to experience greater barriers to participation in adult education courses. The major barriers involve limited material provisions, such as lack of time and money, family duties and inconvenient locations, rather than lack of motivation to participate (Livingstone, Raykov and Stowe, 2001). However, those

from working class origins are more likely to identify extensive informal learning activities than those from higher class origins, regardless of their current class location. Both workers and professional/managerial employees from working class origins indicate they devote about twice as much time to informal learning activities as either workers or professional/managerial employees from professional/managerial origins do. This suggests that working class culture may be at least as stimulating of self-directed learning as middle class culture and that provisions to validate workers' informal learning through prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) could make significant incremental improvements in reducing current class-based educational inequalities. In any case, this array of findings on the extensive informal learning of working class people directly contradicts the presumptions of the various cultural deficit theories that have been used to legitimate the under-representation of working class people in educational institutions (see Curtis, Livingstone and Smaller, 1992; Livingstone and Sawchuk, 2000).

A Widening Gap

The evidence noted previously from the youngest age groups in the most recent national surveys indicates that educational inequality by class origins is again increasing in Canada, with those from the poorest families becoming relatively less able to either participate in or complete university education. In order to understand this widening gap, it is important to look at the factors that influence people's choice to attend university. Specific economic factors clearly predominate, including family socio-economic status, labour market conditions and availability of financing (Bouchard and Zhao 2000), but most evidently the relative affordability.

We know that tuition fees have risen dramatically since the early 1980s, while the average family income adjusted for inflation has been virtually static (Clark, 1998). Between 1990 and 2000, the average undergraduate arts tuition fees across Canada rose by about 125 percent while the incomes of the bottom 40 percent of families actually declined. During this decade, tuition fees increased from representing 14 percent of the after-tax income in the lowest quintile of families up to 23 percent, while only marginally increasing from 3 to 4 percent of the highest quintile family income (CAUT, 2001). Tuition fees rose faster than all of the other costs associated with attending university. In 1989-90, tuition made up 29% of total costs; by 1998-99 tuition made up 47% of total costs. The cost of living in university residence remained quite stable at around 10 percent of gross family income throughout this period. Since there has been a much greater tendency for students from lower SES families to live at home in order to reduce their costs, tuition cost increases have had a much greater impact on their capacity to afford a university education (Bouchard and Zhao, 2000).

Parental aspirations for their children to attend higher education have remained high in all economic groups despite affordability differences. About 80 percent of those earning less than $30,000 hope their children will attend but less than 20 percent have been able to put aside any savings to assist their children, in contrast to over 60 percent of those making over $80,000 (Statistics Canada, 2001a). Between 1984 and 1999, the aggregate amount of outstanding student loans increased by over 6 times and the number of families reporting student loan debts nearly tripled while difficulty in repayment and bankruptcies involving student loans increased steadily (Statistics Canada, 2001b). In 1995 graduates owed at least 60% more in student loans than their 1990 counterparts two years after graduation (Bouchard and Zhao, 2000). Graduates whose parents had not completed high school were more likely to use government student loans than those whose parents had a university degree (Clark, 1998; Stowe, 2000).

Direct evidence is beginning to accumulate of very significant recent changes in the class origins of some university student bodies. A Guelph University study has found that between 1987 and 1996 the proportion of students coming from families making less than $40,000 decreased sharply from 40 percent to 16 percent (Gilbert, McMillan, Quirke and Duncan-Robinson, 1999). A similar pattern has been found at Memorial University in Newfoundland (Alto, Gommes and Micucci, 1999). These shifts could well be an early indicator of even wider gaps by class origins if the relative costs for youths from poorer families continue to rise.

Concluding Remarks

Substantial class mobility should be expected in all advanced capitalist societies because of the underlying dynamic forces driving their production systems. Whether considered in terms of the education of parents and children or in terms of the relations of class origins and educational attainments, inter-generational mobility has probably been relatively high in recent generations in Canada. This specific situation may be attributable to such factors as a relatively late and recent decline in small proprietor-dominated extractive industries and exceptionally fast expansion of government-funded higher educational institutions providing credentials for entrants to compete in expanding labour markets. But there is nothing inevitable about increasing class mobility, as the recent declines in both government education funding and the relative chances of university attendance and completion for youths from lower SES and working class origins attest.

Even in countries like Canada and Sweden where youths from working class origins have had relatively good chances of attaining both more formal education and higher class positions than their parents, the educational inequalities have remained massive. If learning capacities are similarly distributed among those born into all class origins, then the consistent finding that lower class kids have less than half the chance of upper class kids to get to university and to obtain a degree represents an exorbitant waste of talent. While equality of initial educational opportunity may be approached in terms of elementary-secondary school enrolment rates, any approximation of equality of participation in advanced education or of equality of outcomes in terms of graduation rates remains remote in all current societies.

The major barriers to greater educational equality are clearly economic. While accessibility measures such as recognition of prior informal learning achievements and curricular reforms to include more sensitivity to working class and other subordinated group cultures would be constructive steps, it is a lack of material supports that study after study has documented as the main barrier to greater participation and success at all educational levels by those from lower class and income groups. Unfortunately, government financial initiatives in recent years which have emphasized scholarships, loans and family savings plans (e.g. Canada Millennium Scholarships, Registered Education Saving Plan) have not addressed the increasingly unfair burden of rising tuition fees on lower class families, and in fact tend to favour upper class families with significant disposable income. Re-introducing and expanding the needs-based student grants which have been largely eliminated in recent years as well as establishing income-contingent student loan repayment programs would respond to strong popular demand for such programs (Livingstone, Hart and Davie, 1999) and begin to address the again increasing educational inequalities in higher education.

Ultimately, equality of educational outcomes can only be realized if those who complete their formal education are enabled to apply their skills and knowledge in fulfilling work. The extensive underemployment of working class people that already exists in capitalist workplaces, even with the systemic discrimination that persists against the equitable development of their talents in current educational institutions, suggests that few employers are likely to press for either educational or workplace democratization in the foreseeable future. But institutional development in capitalist societies continues to be shaped and limited by class struggles. Campaigns by organized labour and allied social movements to expand "stakeholder capitalism" (with profit sharing, co-determination, reduced workweeks and guaranteed income) and "economic democracy" (with socialized markets, worker self-management, full employment and green work) as alternative production systems to "shareholder capitalism" (with widespread minor stock ownership, re-engineering of the labour process, a more flexible labour force and workfare) are essential elements in ensuring greater availability of fulfilling work and to decreasing the economic disparities that remain at the root of educational inequality.[6] However, as long as most people in subordinate social positions can be convinced that there are real prospects for upward mobility for themselves or their children, these more progressive economic and educational alternatives are unlikely to become prevalent in Canada.

Endnotes

1. Most of the following data in this paper, unless otherwise specified, come from a national survey in late 1998 with a representative sample of 1562 Canadian adults conducted by the research network on New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL) funded by the Social Sciences and

Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Respondents were asked about their paid employment, housework, community volunteer work, as well as their schooling, adult education courses/workshops and informal learning related to each of these three spheres of work and other general interests. The definitions of different aspects of adult learning, survey design and basic findings have been reported in detail in other publications (Livingstone, 1999b: Livingstone, 2001) and the NALL website: www.nall.ca.

2. For detailed discussion of this fuller array of class positions, their relation to conventional Marxist and Weberian class theories and empirical assessment of their association with expressions of class consciousness, see Livingstone and Mangan (1996).
3. As noted in the text, the rapid entry of married women into the employed labour force in the post-WWII era means that the majority of Canadian households now contain at least two wage earners. Any thorough analysis of inter-generational class mobility should consider the economic status of both parents (see Livingstone and Asner, 1996). The focus is on father's class position here because in earlier generations only a minority of mothers were employed and because the NALL survey was only able to ask about fathers' class. The basic mobility patterns have been confirmed with sub-samples of male and female respondents. Inferences of inter-generational change from cross-sectional data such as the NALL survey must be made with caution. However, all of the class and education differences cited in the text have been confirmed for the appropriate age cohorts with a biennial series of surveys conducted in Ontario between 1978 and 2000 (see Livingstone, Hart and Davie, 2001).
4. Analyses from a continuing series of surveys of current corporate executives which we have conducted in Ontario since 1978 (see Livingstone, Hart and Davie, 2001) confirm that the majority of current corporate executives come from proprietorial or professional/managerial families. However, since corporate executives are such a small fraction of the general population (i.e. less than 1.percent), it has not been possible to generate from these general surveys the reliable random sample of prior generation corporate executives that is required to estimate inter-generational reproduction of this class fraction.
5. "Performance underemployment" refers to a condition in which job holders have significantly greater relevant skills and knowledge than they are permitted to utilize in their current jobs. This is typically estimated in terms of the discrepancy between the general educational development (GED) actually required to perform typical job tasks, as equated to years of schooling by expert raters, and the years of schooling job holders have formally attained. The "highly underemployed" are defined here as those who have two or more years of schooling in excess of the rated GED level of their jobs. At least six dimensions of underemployment may be distinguished: the talent use gap; structural unemployment; involuntary temporary employment; the credential gap; the performance gap; and subjective underemployment. The incidence of all aspects of underemployment is higher in working class families. For further discussion of these concepts, empirical measures and related survey findings, see Livingstone (1999a).
6. For a detailed discussion of all three of these economic alternatives in relation to more effective utilization of working peoples' skills and knowledge in present and future workplaces, see Livingstone (1999a).

References

Alto, P., Gommes, I., Micucci, A. (1999). Class inequality in higher education, Peace Review, 11 (2).

Anisef, P., Okihiro, N. and James, C. (1982). The Pursuit of Equality: Evaluating and Monitoring Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education in Ontario. Toronto: Ministry of Education.

Bouchard, B. and Zhao, J. (2000). University education: Recent trends in participation, accessibility and returns, Education Quarterly Review, 6 (4), 24-31.

Butlin, G. (1999). Determinants of Post-Secondary Participation. Statistics Canada. 81-003-XPB.

CAUT. (2001). University and college affordability How and why have fees increased? CAUT Education Review, 3 (2), 1-11.

Canadian Encyclopedia Plus 1996 (1995). Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Clark, W. (2000). 100 Years of..., Canadian Social Trends. (Winter) Statistics Canada. Catalogue #11-008.

Clark, W. (1998). Paying off student loans, Canadian Social Trends. (Winter) Statistics Canada. Catalogue #11-008.

Corak, Miles (2001). Are the kids all right? Intergeneration mobility and child well-being in Canada, The Review of Economic Performance and Social Progress.

Curtis, B., Livingstone, D. W., & Smaller, H. (1992). Stacking the Deck: The Streaming of Working Class Kids in Ontario Schools. Toronto: OurSchools/OurSelves.

De Broucker, P. and Underwood, K. (1998). Intergenerational education mobility: An international comparison with a focus on postsecondary education, Education Quarterly Review, 5 (2), 30-51. Statistics Canada Catalogue #81-003.

Dei, G. et al. (1995). Drop Out or Push Out? The Dynamics of Black Students' Disengagement from School. Toronto: Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, OISE/UT.

Fournier, E., Butlin, G., and Giles, P. (1995). Intergenerational change in the education of Canadians, Education Quarterly Review, 2, 22-33. Catalogue #81-003.

Galabuzi, G-E. (2001). Canada's Creeping Economic Apartheid. Toronto: Centre for Social Justice.

Gaskell, J. (1992) Gender Matters from School to Work. Toronto: OISE Press.

Gilbert, S., McMillan, I., Quirke, L., and Duncan-Robinson, J. (1999). Accessibility and Affordability of University Education. Report to the Senate Committee on University Planning, University of Guelph.

Guppy, N. and Davies, S. (1998). Education in Canada: Recent Trends and Future Challenges. No. 3 Statistics Canada.

Guppy, N., Vellutini, S., and Balson, D. (1987). Women and Higher Education in Canadian Society. In J. Gaskell and A. McLaren (eds.) Women and Education: A Canadian Perspective. Calgary: Detselig.

Harvey, E. (1977). Accessibility to post-secondary education. University Affairs. October, 10-11.

Livingstone, D. W. (1999a). The Education-Jobs Gap: Underemployment or Economic Democracy. Boulder: Westview.

Livingstone, D. W. (1999b). Exploring the icebergs of adult learning: Findings of the First Canadian Survey of Informal Learning Practices. Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 13 (2), 49-72.

Livingstone, D.W. (2001). Working and Learning in the Information Age: A Canadian Profile. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Livingstone, D. W. and E. Asner. (1996). Feet in both camps: Household classes, divisions of labour, and group consciousness in Livingstone, D. W., & Mangan, J. M. (1996). Recast Dreams: Class and Gender Consciousness in Steeltown. Toronto: Garamond Press, pp. 72-99.

Livingstone, D.W., D. Hart and L. Davie. (1999). Public Attitudes towards Education in Ontario 1998: The Twelfth OISE/UT Survey. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Livingstone, D.W., D. Hart and L. Davie. (2001). Public Attitudes towards Education in Ontario 2000: The Thirteenth OISE/UT Survey. Toronto: OISE Press.

Livingstone, D. W., & Mangan, J. M. (1996). Recast Dreams: Class and Gender Consciousness in Steeltown. Toronto: Garamond Press

Livingstone, D. W., Raykov, M., and Stowe, S. (2001). Interest In and Factors Related to Participation in Adult Education and Informal Learning: The AETS 1991, 1993 and 1997 Surveys and the 1998 NALL Survey. Report for Applied Research Branch, Human Resources Development Canada.

Livingstone, D. W., & Sawchuck, P. (2000). Beyond cultural capital theory: Hidden dimensions of working class learning. Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies, 22 (2), 121-146.

Nakhaie, M. R. (2000). Social origins and educational attainment in Canada: 1985 and 1994, Review of radical Political Economics, 32 (4), 577-609.

NALL. (1999). Lifelong Learning Profiles: Findings of the First Canadian Survey of Informal Learning Practices. Website of the Research Network on New Approaches to Lifelong Learning: www.nall.ca.

Pineo, P. and Goyder, J. (1988). Growth of the Canadian education system: An analysis of transitional probabilities, Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 18 (2), 37-55.

Statistics Canada (2000). Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 1999. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Statistics Canada. (2000, February 21). Education Indicators, The Daily.

Statistics Canada (2001a, April 10). [Saving for Higher Education], The Daily.

Statistics Canada (2001b, March 15). Survey of Financial Security, The Daily.

Stowe, S. (2000). Study of OSAP Recipients at Ryerson Polytechnic University. Report for the Office of the Vice President.

Tough, A. (1978). Major learning efforts: Recent research and future directions, Adult Education, 28, 250-263.